

The New Fear: The Marketing of E-Cigarette Nicotine Products and the Surge in Youth Smoking.

The Tobacco Industry is changing and with that change comes new marketing geared towards their target audience, our children and our young adults.

Electronic nicotine delivery systems can go by many names such as e-cigs, vapes, vape pens, mods and tanks. Some brands like JUUL have created their own brand inspired terms for their products like “JUULing”.



And with a new marketing strategy so comes a new look. One that moves away from the traditional reminder that smoking is dangerous and carcinogenic (cancer causing), as the next generation of vaping devices do not even resemble what we have come to know as the “no smoking” sign.

The new vaping devices look more like tech gear for your computer than actual vaping devices. The JUUL device resembling that of a USB storage device. Due to their differences in looks and their claim to be less harmful than cigarette smoke, vapors can go where smokers can't, increasing the risk of everyone's exposure to secondhand smoke. These devices with their sleek and modern design are more appealing across all ages and are becoming increasingly popular and often marketed as “cool” and “high tech” for the future generation.

MOUTH TO LUNG INHALE DEVICES



An e-cig works by heating a solution to a high enough temperature that it produces an aerosol that is inhaled. The aerosol produced by e-cigarettes *is not water vapor and it isn't harmless.*

According to the Surgeon General's warning this inhaled aerosol, while not as toxic as the traditional inhaled cigarette smoke, contains nicotine, volatile organic compounds, heavy metals such as nickel, tin, lead, ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, and unsafe flavorants that are not approved for inhalation use, such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease,.

Exposure to e-cig aerosols are dangerous to both the smoker and the bystander from secondhand exposure.

The Health Risks:

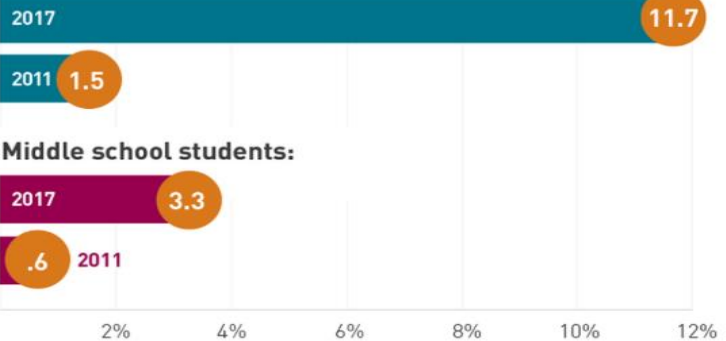
- According to the Surgeon General nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain –which continues to develop until about age 25 and can encourage long term addiction.
- Truth initiative states, “many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which can alter nerve cell functioning in developing organisms, especially during fetal development, they should not be used by youth or pregnant women. Pregnant women who use nicotine are at a greater risk of stillbirth and preterm delivery.”
- Truth Initiative also states that at least 60 chemical compounds have been found in e-liquids, and more are present in the aerosol state produced by e-cigarettes. Several substances which are either harmful or potentially harmful to e-cigarette users, including delivery solvents and propylene glycol, which can cause upper respiratory infections.
- Key issues relating to lung and heart cancer are currently being studied and reviewed, new information is found every day.

Marketing Threats to Our Youth:

The American Heart association says, “many kids falsely believe e-cigarettes and other tobacco products are safe. Some don’t even realize they contain nicotine. But these products can deliver much higher concentrations of this addictive drug than traditional cigarettes. For example, a JUUL prefilled liquid pod contains as much nicotine as a whole pack of cigarettes”. Due to its flavoring and belief that the product is less harmful this encourages our youth to utilize the product more often increasing the amount of their nicotine exposure and the likelihood of early addiction. Since the introduction of E-cigarettes more youth have started using electronic nicotine delivery systems.

Current e-cigarette use among middle and high school students

High school students:



Source: 2017 National Youth Tobacco Survey

How bad is the e-cigarette epidemic?

Most common reasons youth use e-cigarettes¹



39%

Use by “friend or family member”



31%

Availability of “flavors such as mint, candy, fruit, or chocolate”



17%

Belief that “they are less harmful than other forms of tobacco such as cigarettes”

¹Wang TW, Gentzke A, Sharapova S, Cullen KA, Ambrose BK, Jamal A. Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students – United States, 2011–2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2018;67:629–633. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6722a3>

Truth Intuitive gave some alarming concerns stating “many young e-cigarette users do not know what is in the products they are using. A recent study found that 98.7 percent of all e-cigarette products sold at convenience stores, supermarkets and similar outlets contain nicotine. Yet, many young people aren’t aware that the products they use contain nicotine. In fact, 60 percent of teens incorrectly reported e-cigarettes as being comprised of mostly flavoring”. If we look at the packaging the e-liquid is sold in and marketing strategies of these companies use, it is easy to see where this misinformation among our youth stems from. These packages are bright and cheerful, modeled after appetizing foods and flavors, drinks and candy and some have been found to be mislabeled.



Truth Intuitive points out there is a lack of regulation regarding vaping. Make note that currently there is no federal restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes, there are no federal policies restricting indoor use of e-cigarettes (except for federal buildings), and there are few federal restrictions on the marketing of e-cigarettes, and they can be advertised on television and radio. “Virtually all e-cigarettes contain nicotine—even the ones labeled “nicotine free.” This is because there are no rules about how e-cigarettes or “e-juice” are made. There is no way to know exactly what is in an e-cigarette” according to the American Lung Association.

The Surgeon General issued an advisory on e-cigarette’s use calling it a “Youth Epidemic” and it is a serious public health threat. We know nearly 90 percent of smokers first try a tobacco product by age 18. But if our young people don’t start using tobacco by age 26, they are likely to never start. Our focus must be on prevention at this critical stage of life.

For more information on e-cigarettes and what you can do please visit the links below.

Know the Risk. Take Action. Protect Our Kids.



References:

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/e-cigarettes-facts-stats-and-regulations>

<https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/e-cigarettes-and-lung-health.html>

<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>

